DARK HORSE COMICS
35 YEARS
#2

# THE ORVILLE™

## ARTIFACTS
PART 2 OF 2

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# THE ORVILLE™

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## ARTIFACTS PART 2 OF 2


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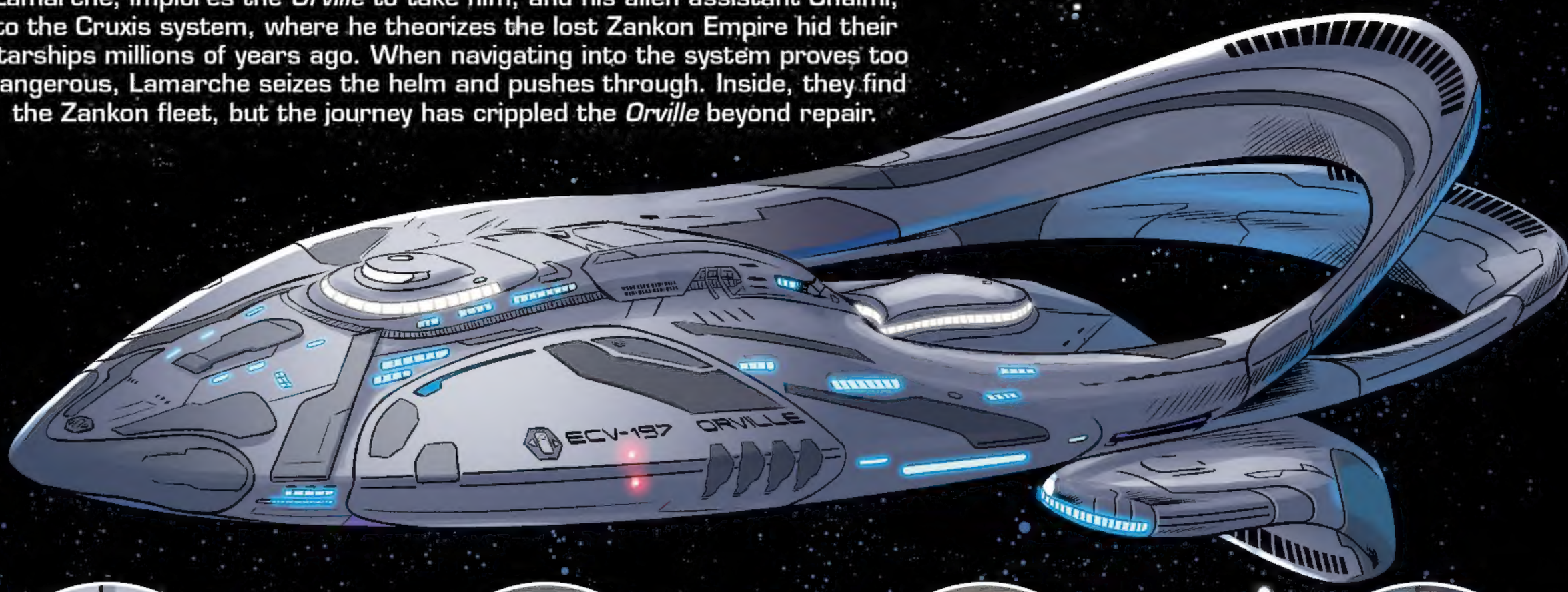
LETTERING
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT

Previously, on *The Orville*: Ed's old astroarchaeology teacher, Professor Lamarche, implores the *Orville* to take him, and his alien assistant Chalmi, to the Cruxis system, where he theorizes the lost Zankon Empire hid their starships millions of years ago. When navigating into the system proves too dangerous, Lamarche seizes the helm and pushes through. Inside, they find the Zankon fleet, but the journey has crippled the *Orville* beyond repair.



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BORTUS, ANY LUCK...

NEGATIVE, COMMANDER, WE STILL CAN'T SEND OR RECEIVE MESSAGES.

THEN WE'RE STUCK WITH A LONG SHOT. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO ABOARD ONE OF THOSE SHIPS.

YOU THINK THEY LEFT AN OWNER'S MANUAL IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT?

IF I'M RIGHT, WE WON'T NEED A MANUAL.

YES, I CAN OPERATE ONE OF THOSE SHIPS. BUT YOU HAVE TO GET ME ABOARD.

MAYBE IT'S BETTER IF YOU JUST TELL US HOW, AND WE KEEP YOU HERE.

THAT WON'T WORK.

WHY NOT?

IF I TOLD YOU, I'D GIVE UP WHATEVER LEVERAGE I HAVE.

THIS IS NOT A GAME. THREE OF MY CREW ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU. YOU'RE GOING TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

I KNOW. BUT IF I BRING BACK EVEN ONE OF THESE SHIPS, MAYBE IT WILL LESSEN THE SEVERITY OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

DON'T COUNT ON IT.

WE'LL LEAVE IN AN HOUR.

I WILL NEED MY ASSISTANT.

I DON'T WANT TO RISK ANYONE'S LIFE UNNECESSARILY.

IF I CANNOT HAVE MY ASSISTANT, THEN I WON'T GO.

ED, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GOING TO TRUST THIS GUY, AFTER WHAT HE DID.
FOR ONCE, GORDON'S RIGHT.
"FOR ONCE"?
IF ANYONE HAS ANY BETTER SUGGESTIONS, I'M ALL EARS.
WHY IS IT SUCH A BIG DEAL THAT I MIGHT BE RIGHT?
WHY DO YOU THINK HE WAS SO INSISTENT ABOUT BRINGING CHALMI?
BECAUSE HE NEEDS A SLAVE TO MAKE HIM LUNCH.
CAN WE STOP WITH THAT?
IT IS STRANGE.
SEEMS LIKE THAT'S THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES. GORDON, GET ISAAC AND PREP A SHUTTLE. TALLA, GET OUR PRISONER AND HIS ASSISTANT, AND LET'S SEE...

"...IF WE CAN TURN ON ONE OF THOSE SHIPS."

ISAAC, ANY SIGN OF SOME KIND OF HATCH?

NEGATIVE, CAPTAIN, THE SURFACE IS COMPLETELY FREE OF OPENINGS.

PROFESSOR, DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHERE WE SHOULD LOOK?

MY ONLY SUGGESTION IS PATIENCE.

IT'S JUST AS YOU SAID, PROFESSOR. DOES THIS MEAN I WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO SEPHALDA?

UNFORTUNATELY, NOT UNTIL WE'RE ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THAT SHIP.

CAPTAIN, LOOK...

...SOMEBODY'S HOME.

THE SHIP IS EMANATING POWER.

AFTER MILLIONS OF YEARS...

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING ON THE BOW...

IT APPEARS TO BE AN OPENING.

LOOKS MORE LIKE A MOUTH.

DO YOU THINK IT'S SAFE TO GO IN?

GIVEN THE LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DEMONSTRATED, THE *ORVILLE* WOULD BE HELPLESS IF THE INHABITANTS OF THE SHIP HAD HOSTILE INTENTIONS.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE SCREWED EITHER WAY.

AFFIRMATIVE.

IN THAT CASE...

"...TAKE US IN."

"I FEEL LIKE WE'RE IN THAT STORY FROM THE BIBLE, ABOUT THE WHALE AND PINOCCHIO."

"GORDON, THAT'S NOT... FORGET IT."

I AM NOW READING AN OXYGEN ATMOSPHERE.

CONVENIENT.

SHALL WE, CAPTAIN? HISTORY AWAITS.

IT FEELS LIKE HE'S EXPECTED ALL OF THIS. KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

KIND OF GOES WITHOUT SAYING.

HOLY CRAP...

LOOK AT ALL THEM. IT'S UNBELIEVABLE.

WHAT KIND OF SHIPS ARE THESE?

THEY WERE MULTIPURPOSE CRAFT THAT COULD SERVE AS SHUTTLES OR FIGHTERS.

TALLA, ANY SIGN OF A WELCOMING COMMITTEE?

NO, SIR, I'M NOT READING ANY LIFE FORMS.

AND YET SOMEBODY TURNED ON THE LIGHTS FOR US.

COULD IT BE SOME AUTOMATIC SYSTEM?

IT IS COUNTERINTUITIVE TO THE CULTURE THAT HAS BEEN ASCRIBED TO THE ZANKON EMPIRE THAT THEIR SHIPS WOULD ALLOW STRANGERS UNFETTERED ACCESS TO THEIR TECHNOLOGY.

YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO THAT, PROFESSOR?

ONLY THAT WHATEVER ANSWERS WE'RE LOOKING FOR NO DOUBT AWAIT US IN THERE...

WAS THAT DOOR THERE BEFORE?

I DON'T THINK SO.

I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

THIS IS UNLIKE ANY SHIP I'VE EVER SEEN.

IT IS AS I EXPECTED. THE ZANKON TECHNOLOGY IS EVEN MORE ADVANCED THAN THE KAYLON.

WE SHOULD PROBABLY TRY TO GET TO THE BRIDGE.

ON A SHIP THIS BIG, IT COULD TAKE A MONTH TO FIND IT.

HEY...

OKAY, WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

MATTER TELEPORTATION. PRESUMABLY WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE BRIDGE.

SOMEBODY IS REALLY FUCKING WITH OUR HEADS.

IF THIS IS THE BRIDGE, WHERE ARE THE CONTROL PANELS?

CAPTAIN, IT IS WORTH NOTING I HAVE OBSERVED NO CONTROL PANELS SINCE BOARDING THIS SHIP.

AND YOU WON'T.

ARE YOU FINALLY GOING TO TELL US WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

THIS CONFIRMS MY THEORY THAT ZANKON TECHNOLOGY WAS SO ADVANCED, THEY CONTROLLED EVERYTHING BY THEIR OWN THOUGHT WAVES.

SO... YOU'VE BEEN OPERATING THE SHIP?

UNFORTUNATELY, NO. ONLY ZANKONS CAN CONTROL IT. THEY WERE A SPECIES WHO ONLY TRUSTED THEIR OWN, AND TRUSTED ALL OF THEIR OWN.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEN WHO...?

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, I FOUND A REMNANT OF FOSSILIZED ZANKON DNA. IT SEEMED LIKELY THAT SINCE THE ZANKON RULED THE GALAXY FOR SEVERAL MILLENNIA, THERE MIGHT BE A DESCENDANT SPECIES STILL ALIVE THAT HAD ITS DNA PASSED DOWN FROM THEM.

CHALMI...

ME?

THAT'S HOW WE GOT ABOARD. CHALMI'S SUBCONSCIOUS MIND WANTED US TO.

BECAUSE SHE KNEW THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY SHE COULD GET HOME.

HER SPECIES SHARES OVER NINETY PERCENT OF ITS DNA WITH THE ZANKON. SHE HAS BEEN SUBCONSCIOUSLY TURNING THIS SHIP ON.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M TURNING ON THE LIGHTS?

YOU CAN DO MORE THAN THAT. SIT IN THIS CHAIR AND YOU CAN FLY THIS SHIP.

ARE WE SURE THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA?

IF YOU WANT TO RESCUE YOUR SHIP AND CREW, CAPTAIN, IT IS OUR ONLY OPTION.

I THINK WE CAN TRUST HER, ED.

ALL RIGHT. CHALMI, THE BRIDGE IS YOURS.

WHAT DO I DO?

WELL, FIRST, MAYBE THINK ABOUT TURNING THE ENGINES ON.

IT WOULD APPEAR...

RMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM

"...THE ENGINES ARE ONLINE."

MAIN POWER SYSTEMS ACTIVATING ON THE ZANKON SHIP...

*ORVILLE* TO MERCER. ED, WHAT'S GOING ON?

*UH... LONG STORY, KELLY, IT'S ALL GOOD...*

...BUT KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.

NOW WHAT?

JUST THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU WANT THE SHIP TO GO.

HOLY CRAP.

WE HAVE TRAVERSED THE SYSTEM.

THIS IS AMAZING! WHERE SHOULD I GO NOW?

HEAD FOR THOSE ASTEROIDS...

"...AND STOP IN FRONT OF THAT LARGE ONE."

NOW DESTROY IT.

WHAT...

DESTROY IT!

LOOKS LIKE THE WEAPONS STILL WORK.

ORVILLE TO MERCER, DID YOU JUST BLOW UP AN ASTEROID ON PURPOSE?

YEAH, KINDA. IT'S OKAY, KELLY, WE'LL BE HOME IN A LITTLE BIT. WE HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT...

THE ZANKON FLEET IS THE GREATEST TECHNOLOGICAL FIND IN HISTORY. IF THE WRONG PEOPLE GET THEIR HANDS ON IT--

THEY WON'T. I'LL MAKE SURE OF THAT.

*YOU'LL* MAKE SURE OF IT?

FROM WHERE? JAIL?

I DON'T THINK THE UNION WILL PUT ME IN JAIL WHEN I OFFER THEM THESE SHIPS.

THREE PEOPLE ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF YOUR RECKLESSNESS.

AND HOW MANY MILLIONS WILL BE SAVED WHEN THE UNION IS GIVEN ACCESS TO THIS TECHNOLOGY?

THE END DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE MEANS.

EXCEPT WHEN IT DOES.

TALLA, CONFINE HIM TO QUARTERS.

ARE YOU GOING TO SAY IT?
YES, YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HIM. HE'S AN ASSHOLE.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE AT HIS MERCY.
NO, WE'RE NOT... WE'RE AT CHALMI'S...
IS THIS MOVIE NIGHT?
CHALMI CAN ACCESS THE RECORDS OF THE ZANKON SHIP. THIS IS A RECORDING OF A SLAVE UPRISING.
THEY LOOK LIKE ME, BUT THEY'RE SO MEAN.
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, LIEUTENANT?

WELL, I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU'VE FILLED HER IN ON WHAT'S NEXT?
WE'RE GOING HOME.
YEAH, AND THEN WHAT?
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE, LIEUTENANT...
MAKE ME.
HAS HE TOLD YOU HE'S GOING TO NEED A LOT MORE OF YOUR PEOPLE TO FLY THOSE SHIPS? HE'S NOT SATISFIED TURNING YOU INTO A SLAVE, CHALMI. HE WANTS ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TOO.
IS THIS... TRUE?
HE IS OVERSIMPLIFYING THIS TO UPSET YOU. WITH THESE SHIPS, CHALMI, YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE THE MOST POWERFUL RACE IN THE GALAXY.
AS LONG AS YOU LISTEN TO HIM.
UH-OH.

MALLOY TO MERCER. CHALMI HAS DISAPPEARED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "DISAPPEARED"...

IT WAS THAT TELEPORTATION THING...

CAPTAIN, POWER SYSTEMS ARE ACTIVATING ABOARD THE ZANKON VESSEL. AND I AM DETECTING ONE LIFE FORM ABOARD.

GORDON, GET UP HERE...

I'M HERE, I'M HERE...

THE ZANKON SHIP IS MOVING OUT OF FORMATION.

OH, CRAP. TALLA, HAVE LAMARCHE BROUGHT TO THE BRIDGE.

...AND SEE IF YOU CAN RAISE THAT SHIP.

I CAN SEE YOU, COMMANDER.

CHALMI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

FLYING THIS SHIP HAS BEEN INTERESTING, BUT I CAN'T LET THE PROFESSOR FORCE MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO LEAVE HOME. I HAVE TO STOP HIM.

STOP HIM... HOW?

YOU WILL SEE.

THE SHIP IS CHARGING ITS WEAPONS.

ISAAC, HOW MANY HITS CAN WE TAKE FROM THAT SHIP?

IT IS UNLIKELY THE *ORVILLE* WOULD SURVIVE ONE DISCHARGE OF THEIR ENERGY WEAPON.

SO... THE NUMBER OF HITS WE CAN TAKE IS ZERO.

I DON'T THINK WE'RE THE TARGET...

SHE IS DESTROYING THE ZANKON FLEET.

WHAT? WE HAVE TO STOP HER!

IT'S A LITTLE LATE...

"...SHE'S PRETTY MUCH DONE."

LATER...

YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT IF I LEAVE YOU HERE?

YES, WE CONTACTED OUR FLEET, THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY. AND THE LESS PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT THAT SHIP, THE BETTER.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, CHALMI?

I'M GOING HOME.

PLEASE, CHALMI, THAT SHIP MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME... TAKE ME WITH YOU... I'M SORRY.

I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE CALL "TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE."

GOODBYE, CHALMI.

GOODBYE, GORDON. AND THANK YOU.

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. ALTHOUGH I WILL POINT OUT...

"...FOR ONCE I WAS RIGHT ABOUT EVERYTHING."